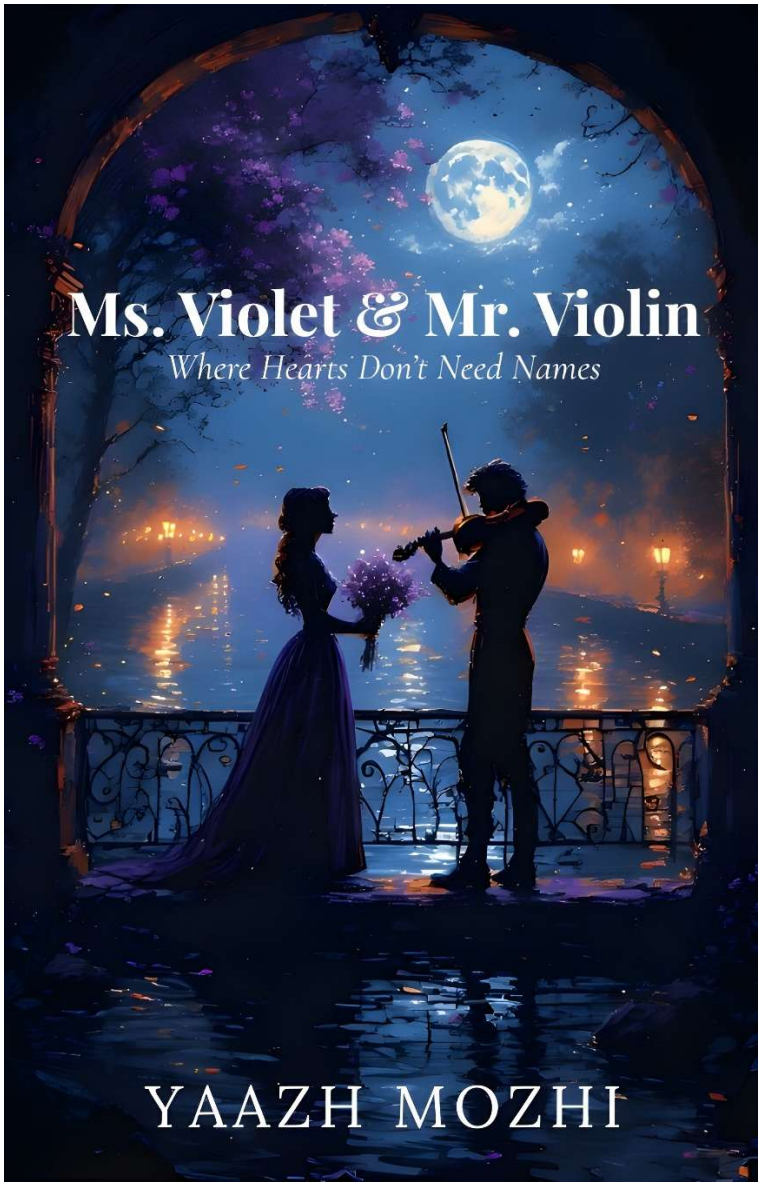
Ms. Violet & Mr. Violin
Where Hearts Don't Need Names
YAAZH MOZHI

This book is dedicated
to the ones we meet,
and never forget.

With Love,

*Yaazh Mozhi*

Ms. Violet & Mr. Violin :

Where Hearts Don’t Need Names

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## Introduction

Some stories are not told to impress.
They are told to remember.
To preserve a single day before time washes it away.

This is one such story.
It does not stretch across years or chapters of a long-winded love.
It lives in a single day, quiet, fleeting, and forgotten by the world. But not by them.

She carries silence behind her smile, a ticking clock inside her fragile brain.
He walks with music in his fingers and solitude in his soul. They meet by chance. Or maybe by something softer than fate.

For twenty-four hours, they share something that does not need to be

defined. Not love. Not friendship. Something in between, where no promises are made, and none are broken. They walk. They talk. They sit in silence. They listen. They simply exist in each other's presence, without needing to explain why.

This story is not about how long they had. It is about how deeply they felt, in the time they were given. It is about how even the briefest bonds can leave behind echoes. How even a stranger can become a memory that sings. How hearts, even when unnamed, still remember.

And sometimes,
that is enough.

Welcome to a day that changed everything.
Welcome to *Ms. Violet & Mr. Violin*.

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# Midnight Strings

The night held its breath as she stepped through the hospital doors, medical files clutched in one hand, and a silence heavier than pain resting in the other. Inside her skull, a fragile storm waited, unseen but always there. A reminder that even quiet things can break without warning.

She sits quietly, waiting for her name to be called. Around her, life moves in all directions. A child laughs, a couple whispers, someone cries softly behind a mask. Joy, Hope, Worry, Relief, but none of it touches her. What fills her mind is not feeling, but weight. A quiet despair that settles in like fog, refusing to lift.

"*The tests are clear,*" the doctor said gently. "*You'll need to be admitted in two days. Bring whatever you need, and come back on Monday. Make sure to inform anyone you have to.*"

She nodded, but her mind had already drifted somewhere else. The words reached her ears, but not her heart. She walked out without asking another question. Some things were easier to accept in silence. She descended the stairs, her mind crowded with thoughts she couldn't quiet.

Halfway down, she slipped. Her feet gave way, and the world tilted for a moment. The medical files scattered like fallen feathers, pages skimming the steps, one sliding silently through the crack beneath the door at the bottom. She winced, sat still for a moment, then

rose. Opening the door, she found herself somewhere unexpected. A dimly lit space. Old wooden chairs. A circle of elders, softly humming a tune that felt older than time. She bent down, picked up the lone sheet that had slipped through. Then, slowly, she stepped inside. Her steps unsure, drawn forward not by logic, but by something quieter. And just ahead of her, through the dim warmth and drifting song, a figure began to take shape.

A young man sat in the center, his fingers gliding over the violin, his voice weaving gently into the tune. The elderly around him swayed and hummed, their murmurs rising and falling with the music. She stood quietly at first, watching. Then, without realizing, she began to hum along softly, hesitantly until her voice melted into theirs. He

noticed her. Just a glance. But it held the warmth of recognition. He smiled, and without missing a note, kept singing as if the song had been waiting for her.

When his final note faded into silence, a brief stillness lingered the kind that follows something precious. Then came the applause. Gentle, heartfelt. She clapped along with the elderly, her eyes still fixed on him. He stood, gave a small bow, and carefully tucked the violin into its case, as though placing a heartbeat back into a box. She stepped forward, drawn by something she couldn't name.

"*You played beautifully*," she said, her voice light but trembling. "*I forgot about myself… for a while*."

He looked up and smiled. Not out of pride, but in the quiet way artists smile when someone truly listens. But in the

next moment, her face dimmed. The smile faded. The reminder of a ticking truth she could never quite forget.

"*What happened, madam?*" he asked gently, noticing the sudden shift in her face. She smiled, but a tear had already fallen.

"*Nothing… let it go,*" she whispered.
"*No,*" he said, his voice steady, "*don't let it go. If there's anything I can do to help, tell me. I mean it.*"

She looked away for a moment, then said quietly, "*You won't understand. Even when I try to hold onto my life… time just keeps slipping through my fingers.*"

He watched her in silence, then replied, "*You can't stop time. But maybe… you*

*can change it*." She wiped her eyes, thinking. He picked up his violin case and added with a soft grin, "*Dreams… aren't meant to stay dreams forever. Turn them into memories. If change is possible—change it. Sometimes, changes turn out beautiful.*"

He began to walk, but her voice stopped him. "*Can you change it?*" she asked, her voice filled with quiet hope.

He turned, puzzled. "*What?*"

She took a step closer. "*I can't change it alone. Will you help me?*"

He paused just for a breath and then, with a smile that felt like sunrise, he said, "*Okay*." The clock struck twelve. Both their eyes drifted toward it, then back to each other as if midnight itself had been waiting for this moment.

"*It's exactly 12,*" she said, her voice filled with quiet thrill. "*I'm going to take this whole Sunday for myself. Every wish I've buried inside me… I want to live them today. Will you come with me, for all of it?*"

He didn't hesitate. "*I'll definitely fulfill my fan's wish,*" he said with a playful smile.

She lit up, truly lit up and before she could stop herself, she hugged him tight. A heartbeat passed. Then she pulled away in a flurry of nerves, her face flushed. "*Forgive me…*" she murmured, eyes dropping to the floor.

He tilted his head, grinning. "*Is that your first wish?*" She laughed, brushing her hair back, her smile peeking through the mess of emotions.

"*So, where do we start first?*" he asked. She didn't answer. Instead, she grabbed his violin case and tugged him along.

As they stepped out of the hospital, she whispered into the night, "*I want to run. Just… run.*" He dropped the violin case gently onto a bench, looked at her with a gleam in her eyes, and said one word: "*Run.*"

She took off. The cold wind wrapped around her like a second skin, lifting her as if the air itself was cheering her on. He didn't run. He raised his camera, capturing her, free, wild, unafraid like a scene that belonged in a dream.

The street lay silent under the midnight sun. Streetlights cast their golden glow on empty roads, while pigeons rested on tiled rooftops, flowers swayed in gentle motion, and the cool breeze wrapped

around them like a lullaby. She danced beneath the trees, arms stretched out, spinning like a child who had never forgotten how to be happy. Joy shimmered in her eyes, like a secret she carried for too long. He watched her with a smile, walking beside her.

"*Alright, let's start with something simple. What's your name?*" Her voice held the curiosity of a child. She paused, still catching her breath, and turned to him with a thoughtful smile.

"*You were the one who brought me into your life, you're the one sharing your dreams with me... shouldn't you be the one to give me a name too?*" She glanced sideways at his violin case, her fingers slowly tracing an invisible line in the air. "*Violin,*" she whispered, then

looked at him, hopeful. "*From now on, your name is Violin. Do you like it?*"

He blinked, surprised, then smiled deeply. "*It's more beautiful than any name I've been called before. Yes. Good.*"

She leaned in slightly. "*Then it's your turn. Give me a name too.*" But before she could finish the sentence, she blurted out with delight,

"*Violet! You'll be Violet!*"

And she twirled again, arms floating, "*Violet… Violet…*" she repeated softly, the name blooming in her voice like a memory being written for the first time.

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## Whispers at Dawn

The two of them wandered through the hushed streets, their footsteps brushing against the silence of dawn. It was 5 a.m. The sea breeze carried the scent of salt and stillness as they walked near the beach. Their words, like the morning light, slowly began to break through.

"*So, how old are you? You look like a little girl,*" he asked, smiling casually.

"*Little girl?*" she scoffed, raising her eyebrows. "*I'm twenty-one, Mr. Violin.*"

"*Okay, madam! Don't be angry, I believe you,*" he replied with a mock salute, making her giggle.

"*Now it's your turn. Are you going to stay quiet all day today?*" she teased.

"*I'm twenty-four,*" he said. "*I teach violin to kids on weekdays, perform in streets on Saturdays… Sundays are my pause. That's my life.*"

She looked at him, listening, then sighed. "*There's nothing exciting about mine. Just… hospitals, pills, quiet rooms. My world is filled with medicines, dizziness, and a strange kind of waiting. Everything in between feels empty.*" Her voice dropped to a whisper. "*My life… feels squeezed between home and hospital.*"

"*But today won't be that kind of day.*" His voice was soft, certain. The first light of dawn spilled across the sky. Golden rays kissed her face, brushing away the shadows beneath her eyes. "*Look there,*" he said, stretching out his hand toward the horizon.

She followed his gaze. The sun was rising slowly, tenderly as if it, too, had waited for this moment. Her eyes shimmered. "*This is your life,*" he whispered. "*Your days begin today*." Something inside her shifted. Like a flower turning to light. Violet didn't say a word, but in that silence, her soul whispered back: *I am alive again*.

Violet picked up his camera and snapped a photo of her. A quiet moment, eyes closed, light brushing across her face. As she opened her eyes, he quickly hid the camera behind her.

"*Shall we go?*" he asked, smiling gently. She nodded. The two of them began walking along the shoreline, their footprints soft in the morning sand. After a while, Violet said, "*I'm hungry… can we eat something?*"

He turned to her. “*Do you have any wishes?*” Her face lit up like sunlight through clouds. Without a word, she grabbed his hand and broke into a run, laughing like a child set free. He ran with her. Not knowing where, but knowing it mattered.

They were sitting at a cozy coffee shop. Violet sipped from her warm cup while nibbling a biscuit. Across the table, he watched in surprise as she filled the space with ice cream, donuts, cookies until there was barely any room left.

"*Have you ever eaten anything like this before?*" he asked, half-laughing.

Without even swallowing her bite, she replied, “*The doctor said I shouldn’t eat any of this. But after this, I’ll be in the hospital… so today, I eat as I please. Don’t stop me.*”

"*Come on, what's the big deal? Is it some kind of disease like Corona or something?*" he asked, leaning in. She burst out laughing, holding her cheeks. "*What? Did I say something wrong?*" he asked again, now unsure.

"*No, nothing wrong,*" she said softly, her smile fading a little. "*But you won't really get it. Let's just eat.*"

He gently placed his hand near hers. "*Please. Think of it as my wish, Miss Violet.*"

She looked at him. Her eyes stayed quiet for a moment. Then she spoke. "*It's called an unruptured cerebral aneurysm,*" she said, then paused. "*Basically, a tiny bubble in one of the blood vessels in my brain. It doesn't hurt, it doesn't scream. But if it ever bursts… that's it.*"

He stared at her, stunned. “*I carry it quietly,*” she added, with a small smile. “*Like something ticking inside me. So today… I just want to feel full.*”

"*You're just sitting here with me, carrying something so serious inside your head?*" He asked, clearly stunned.

Violet smiled, took a sip of her coffee, and replied softly, "*When you buy something new, it excites you at first… but with time, you get used to it. This is kind of like that. Except, maybe… a little different.*" She paused, then added with a light chuckle, "*Anyway, don’t overthink it. Just eat.*"

Violet felt a pang of sorrow after earning about her condition, but she didn’t let it show. Instead, she kept eating, smiling as if there were no storm inside her.

"*You're still not done?*" she asked with a playful glare. "*Hurry up! We've got a whole world to catch today!*"

They finished their meal and stepped out, walking gently side by side. Around 10 AM, they reached a wide road crowded with people. She blinked in surprise. "*Why are all these people just standing around? Is there going to be a marathon?*" she asked, puzzled.

Violin grinned. "*Not a marathon, this is Happy Street. Every Sunday, for two hours, people gather here to dance, sing, and just… live freely*."

"*I've never heard of this before,*" she said, unsure. "*How can I just jump in?*"

"*You don't need permission to be happy,*" he replied. "*For the next two*

*hours, everyone's a friend. Come on, let's celebrate today.*"

She gently held his hand and moved into the crowd. Just then, a group of young women approached Violet. "*If you're okay with it... will you dance with us? Please?*" one of them asked kindly.

Violet glanced at Violin. He nodded with a smile, and just like that, she began to dance.

At first, the music was a rhythm she could follow. She twirled with the other girls, her arms catching sunlight, her laughter rising like a melody. Violin watched her from the sidelines, heart swelling. Violet was blooming right in front of him.

But then the crowd thickened. More people poured in, cheering and clapping,

cellphones raised, voices rising. A DJ near the center turned up the volume, and the music pulsed louder, faster. No longer a song, but a thump against the chest.

Violin pushed forward, trying to keep her in sight. "*Violet!*" he called, weaving through the crowd. She was still dancing, but her steps slowed. Her smile was dimming. He saw it. A surge of people spilled between them.

"*Violet!*" he shouted again, louder this time, trying to reach her. But the bass drowned him out. The speaker blared. Drums. Horns. Roaring laughter.

Then she was gone. Violin broke free of the dancing crowd, breath shallow. He turned in every direction, panic beginning to seep in. "*Violet!*"

That's when he saw her, curled behind a tree near the edge of the street, hands clamped tightly over her ears, her head bowed low. He rushed toward her. She didn't look up. She was breathing fast, like something inside her was trying to burst free. The joy that had just filled her moments ago was now replaced by sharp, invisible pain.

"*Violet,*" he said, kneeling beside her, voice softer now, barely above the chaos.

Her lips trembled. "*It's too loud,*" she whispered. "*My head… it hurts, it's pounding. I can't think.*"

Without a word, he took off his jacket and gently wrapped it around her shoulders, as if it could shield her from the noise. Then, slowly, he reached for her hands and lowered them from her ears, holding them in his own. The

music still blared behind them, but his eyes didn't waver.

"*Come with me,*" he said. "*Just breathe. We'll leave right now.*"

She nodded faintly, eyes glistening. And together, they disappeared down a quiet street, the music fading behind them like a world they no longer belonged to.

———

## The Morning We Borrowed

They walked slowly until the pulse of the city softened into the warm hum of a food street. The scents of roasted corn, fried dumplings, sweet buns, and spiced noodles danced in the air. Neon lights flickered lazily above colorful trucks, and voices blurred into a comforting, distant murmur.

Violin gently guided her toward a small table beside a food truck. "*Sit here,*" he said softly.

Violet eased into the chair, her shoulders still tense. Her breath was steadier now, but her eyes held the echo of the chaos they'd escaped.

He disappeared for a moment, then returned with a bottle of water. Twisting

off the cap, he handed it to her wordlessly.

She took it slowly, her fingers brushing his. The cool water touched her lips, and for a moment, she closed her eyes, just breathing, just existing.

"I'm sorry," he said, kneeling slightly beside her chair, his voice low and heavy with guilt. "*I didn't think the music would… I shouldn't have taken you there.*"

She opened her eyes, mid-sip, and gave him a sharp look. "*Stop.*"

He blinked. "*What?*"

"*Don't apologize,*" she said, her voice firm but not unkind. "*Don't you dare apologize for trying to make me happy.*"

Violin stayed still. She sat up straighter, water bottle in hand. "*You didn't drag me into that crowd. I wanted to go. I wanted to dance. I laughed, I twirled, I felt alive—don't you see? You gave me that.*"

"*But you…*"

"*Yes, it hurt. Yes, I panicked,*" she cut in. "*But that doesn't mean you did anything wrong. You're not a magician. You can't predict every moment. You tried to fulfill my wish, and that means more to me than you'll ever understand.*"

She sighed, softer now, her gaze dropping to the bottle in her hand. "*I'm tired of people treating me like I'll break just by breathing too loud. You didn't do that. You saw me today. You let me be free. So no more sorries, Violin.*"

He nodded slowly, lips parting to speak but saying nothing.

She smiled gently, tapping his hand with her fingertips. "*You're doing fine, you know*."

Violin stared at the ground, still wrapped in guilt, hands resting on his knees. Violet glanced sideways at him, then leaned in, her voice softer now. "*Hey…*"

He didn't respond. She nudged his arm with a small grin. "*If you keep looking that guilty, people are going to think you pushed me into a speaker*." He cracked a smile, just barely.

"*There it is,*" she teased. "*A smile. Not bad, Mr. Violin*."

He looked up, finally meeting her eyes. "*I really thought I broke the day*."

"*You didn't,*" she said firmly. "*You bent it a little. Then we bent it back.*"

A quiet laugh escaped him. Then another. And finally, both of them were chuckling under the glow of fairy lights strung between food trucks, their breath puffing into the night air like smoke from warm hearts. As the laughter died down, Violet inhaled deeply. "*Mmm… do you smell that?*"

He tilted his head. "*Which part?*"

"*All of it. The spices, the grilling, the fried things. It's like the street's trying to seduce me.*"

Violin raised an eyebrow. "*Seduce you?*"

She gave him a dramatic look. "*With food. My one true weakness.*"

He laughed again. "*Hungry?*"

"*Just a little,*" she said, rubbing her stomach. "*The smells are making it worse*."

"*Alright,*" he said, leaning forward. "*What haven't you eaten before? Like… something you've always wanted but never got the chance to try?*"

She tapped her chin thoughtfully. "*Okay. No judging. Here's my list*."

She held up her fingers as she counted. "*One: Chicken. Any form. Never had it*."

His eyes widened. "*You're joking*."

"*I'm not*."

He stood up suddenly, taking her hand in his. "*Then that's it. First on the list, first in our hearts*."

"*Wait, what's happening?*"

"*We're going to find the best chicken place in this entire city,*" he declared, already pulling her into the stream of food stalls. "*Come on!*"

She giggled, catching up beside him. "*Are you seriously about to go on a chicken quest with me?*"

"*I've done less noble things with my life,*" he replied with mock seriousness.

They weaved through the street, scanning signboards and menus. The smell of grilled meat and sizzling spices filled the air, tempting at every turn.

Then, just ahead, glowing letters caught their eye. "*PickChik - Rooftop Chicken Bistro*" Violet gasped. "*That's it. Sounds perfect.*"

Violin grinned. "*Then let's meet it.*"

Together, they made their way up the narrow staircase, toward a rooftop filled with warm lights, sizzling pans, and a night sky ready to witness their next memory.

They stepped onto the rooftop, greeted by golden lights and the scent of spice-rich smoke curling up from the grills. Violin gently pulled out a chair for her beside a wooden table near the edge, where a cool breeze played with the fringe of her hair.

"*Sit here,*" he said, smiling.

She sat down with a grateful sigh. He took the seat opposite her, placing his elbows on the table as he watched her settle in. A waiter approached with a notepad and pen in hand. "*Good evening! Ready to order?*"

Violin raised a hand. "*Give us five minutes, please.*"

The waiter gave a polite nod and moved on to another table. Violin slid the menu card across to her. "*You're the queen of this meal. Choose what makes your soul happy.*"

Violet opened the card slowly and then, her eyes widened.

"*Are you seeing this?*" she gasped, scanning the list. "*Butter garlic wings, spicy grilled leg, honey-glazed thighs, tandoori strips, popcorn chicken. What is this place? Chicken heaven?*"

Violin chuckled. "*Pick anything. Everything, even. I won't stop you.*"

She grinned, the light in her eyes returning. "*Okay, don't blame me if I go crazy.*"

He leaned back, arms crossed with a teasing smirk. "*Go crazy. Permission granted.*"

She scanned a little more and then pointed, eyes glowing. "*Okay! First… Crispy Korean Chicken—I've always wanted to try it after seeing it in K-dramas.*"

Violin nodded with approval.

"*Second,*" she said, flipping a page. "*Spicy Butter Garlic Drumsticks, because… just listen to that name. And third…*" She tapped her lips, thinking, then beamed. "*Cheese-Stuffed Chicken Pops. Because I want to know what it feels like when something explodes with cheese.*"

Violin laughed. "*You're really going all in.*"

"*You told me to.*"

"*Fair enough,*" he said, turning to the waiter who had returned. "*One chicken burger for me and she'll have the Korean chicken, butter garlic drumsticks, and cheese-stuffed pops.*"

The waiter scribbled it all down with a look of amusement. "*Got it. That's going to be a feast.*"

"*We like our dreams crispy and deep-fried,*" Violet said with a wink. The waiter chuckled and moved away. Violet leaned forward on her elbows, smiling wide. "*I can't believe this is real. I've been alive for twenty-one years and never tasted a single bite of chicken… but tonight, I'm trying three.*"

Violin smiled back, more softly this time. "*Then it is already a win.*"

## Dreams We Never Lived Before

The breeze swept gently across the rooftop, rustling the pages of the menu card that still sat open on the table. From somewhere behind the kitchen window, the sound of sizzling oil crackled faintly, blending with the soft hum of afternoon conversation.

Violin glanced at his watch. *1:15 PM*. It felt like the day had stretched itself out just for them.

He leaned forward, resting his arms on the table, eyes thoughtful. "*Can I ask you something?*" he said.

Violet looked up, curious. "*Of course*."

"*You really haven't had even a single piece of chicken in your whole life?*"

She smiled a little, then slowly shook her head. "*Not one. Not even an egg.*"

His eyebrows raised. "*That's… kind of impressive, actually. But why?*"

Her eyes wandered to the edge of the rooftop, where sunlight danced along the city's skyline. "*My mom passed away when I was just a baby,*" she said softly. "*A few weeks after I was born. I never got to know her. But her caretaker, Mary aunty. She raised me for a while. She was warm… loving… She gave me milk bottles, told me stories, sang lullabies. I don't remember most of it, but sometimes I feel like my body does.*" Violin nodded, listening intently.

"*When I turned two, my father remarried,*" Violet continued. "*My stepmom wasn't cruel… but she never*

*accepted me either. I wasn't hers. She didn't hurt me, but she didn't love me either. Not even a little.*" Violin's expression softened.

"*She laid off Mary,*" Violet said quietly. "*Told my father she wanted to take care of the house herself. She cooked all the meals, pure vegetarian. No meat. No eggs. Nothing that didn't grow out of the ground.*"

Violin's fingers slowly curled into a fist around the edge of the table, not out of anger, just quiet frustration for the child she once was. "*So that became my world. No one ever offered me anything different. I didn't even know what chicken tasted like. I saw it on TV, in movies… friends talked about it at school, but I was too shy to ask. And by*

*the time I was old enough to make my own choices…*"

She shrugged. "*The hospital visits had started. The fatigue. The tests. It never felt like the right time to try anything. Until today.*"

Violin leaned back in his chair, eyes still on her. "*And now… it is.*"

Violet looked at him, her smile soft but steady. "*Because you made it the right time.*"

For a long second, they didn't say anything. Just sat there, two people wrapped in sunlight, memories, and the scent of something sizzling toward perfection. Violin watched her for a moment, then asked gently, "*What about school? Did you have any close friends back then?*"

Violet exhaled slowly, leaning back in her chair. "*Not really*."

He waited, giving her space.

"*My father is one of the city's wealthiest entrepreneurs,*" she said calmly, eyes focused on the table's edge. "*Everyone at school knew that. But that didn't mean they wanted to know me*." Violin's brows lifted slightly in surprise.

"*I studied at one of the most prestigious high schools. Big campus, famous alumni, expensive uniforms… all of it*." Her voice was steady but distant. "*But no one ever got close. Not really. Some tried to be polite. A few were curious. But most… avoided me. I wasn't exactly the kind of girl people invited to birthday parties or late-night study groups*."

Violin didn't speak. He could see she wasn't looking for sympathy, she was simply letting the truth breathe. "*Was it because of who your father was?*" he asked gently.

"*Partly,*" she replied. "*But also because I wasn't like them. I didn't have stories about family vacations or siblings to fight with or moms waiting with lunch boxes. My world was quieter. And lonelier.*"

She paused, then added, "*I used to go out with my father sometimes. Rare moments when he wasn't working. We'd go for a drive or dinner… but even then, my stepmom would always find a way to be there. To remind me I didn't really belong. I think… she didn't want him to love me more than her.*" Violin's expression softened into something

unreadable, half sorrow, half quiet anger.

"*So eventually,*" Violet continued, her voice softening, "*I learned to be enough for myself. It wasn't ideal. But it was real.*"

Violin swallowed, the words caught in his throat. He wanted to say something, anything that would reach back into her childhood and change it. But there were no words strong enough for that.

He simply whispered, "*You deserved better.*"

She smiled faintly, touched by the honesty in his voice. Just then, the waiter returned, carefully balancing a large tray filled with steam, spice, and sizzling delight.

"*Your order, madam and sir!*" he announced with flair, placing each dish gently on the table. A basket of Crispy Korean Chicken, glistening with a sweet-spicy glaze. A plate of Spicy Butter Garlic Drumsticks, steaming hot and golden. A tray of Cheese-Stuffed Chicken Pops, their centers oozing just slightly. And finally, Violin's classic chicken burger, stacked tall and wrapped with fresh lettuce and toasted buns. The waiter gave a polite bow. "*Enjoy your meal.*"

Violet stared at the food, wide-eyed and silent. Then, slowly, a smile bloomed across her face like sunshine breaking through heavy clouds. From the kitchen, the waiter emerged carrying a steaming tray. Violet turned to Violin, eyes wide. "*It's happening*."

Violin leaned in. "*Ready for your first-ever bite of chicken?*"

She looked at him, her voice almost a whisper. "*More ready than ever*."

Violet reached slowly toward the Crispy Korean Chicken, her fingers hovering over the glazed pieces as if they might vanish if she moved too fast. Her eyes flicked up to Violin's seeking not permission, but maybe reassurance.

He gave her a gentle nod. "*Go on. No one's stopping you this time*."

She picked up a piece. The glaze was sticky, the scent warm and sweet, edged with spice. She brought it close, paused, then took a bite.

*Crunch*. A slow silence followed.

Her eyes widened slightly as she chewed, the flavors unfolding one after

another, first sweet, then smoky, then a playful heat tickling the back of her tongue. And then, her expression changed. Not dramatic. Not loud. Just… still.

She closed her eyes. And smiled. But the smile trembled. Her hand lowered slowly to the table, still holding the half-eaten piece. She covered her mouth with her other hand, not because she disliked it, but because something inside her cracked open, quietly and deeply.

"*I…*" she whispered, voice thick. "*I didn't know food could taste like this.*" Violin sat quietly, watching her.

Tears welled in her eyes before she could stop them. She gave a soft laugh through it. "*Sorry, I didn't mean to cry. It's just… I've waited so long for something I didn't even know I missed.*"

She wiped her cheek with the edge of her sleeve, smiling through the shimmer. "*It's not just chicken. It's choice. It's taste. It's mine.*"

Violin didn't say a word. He just picked up his burger and held it high, like a toast. "*To your first.*"

She grinned and lifted the chicken in return. "*To my freedom.*"

They clinked their bites together, laughing lightly as they took another round.

And for the first time in years, Violet wasn't just eating, She was *living*.

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## One Note After Sunset

They sat at their little rooftop table under the soft shade of a woven canopy. Around them, the lunchtime buzz of PickChik carried on, orders flying in, plates clinking, happy chatter floating in the air. But at their table, time had slowed to a quieter rhythm.

Violin had already finished his burger. He leaned back in his chair, sipping water, watching Violet carefully.

She was still eating slowly, reverently. Every bite of her first chicken meal was an experience. She closed her eyes sometimes just to feel the flavor more deeply. She smiled between bites like she was discovering a world no one had ever told her about.

Violin reached into his sling bag, pulled out his camera, and without saying a word, captured the moment. Click.

She looked up, mid-chew, eyebrows raised. "*Did you just…?*"

"*I did,*" he said, grinning. "*First chicken moment? Had to be documented.*"

She rolled her eyes playfully. "*You're going to blackmail me with that one day, aren't you?*"

"*I'd never,*" he teased. "*This one's for my secret photo collection of happy people.*"

She smiled again, softer this time. Then leaned her arms across the table, chin resting on her hands. "*So… what about you?*"

Violin blinked. "*Me?*"

"*Yeah,*" she said, tilting her head. "*You already know half my childhood trauma. Fair is fair.*"

He looked out across the edge of the rooftop, where the buildings stretched upward like old, silent witnesses. He took a breath. "*My mother passed away when I was five,*" he began. Violet's smile faded gently. She listened, fully present.

"*My father raised me. He was a pianist, also a music teacher at the high school I teach at now. We didn't have much, but I had music. I'd sit under the piano while he played, and I'd listen to his notes like they were stories meant just for me.*" Violin's voice softened.

"*I didn't just love him. I admired him. I wasn't just his son. I was his number-*

*one fan*." Violet's eyes stayed on him, her food forgotten for the moment.

"*As I grew up, I found my own sound in the violin. He encouraged it. We started playing together… at orphanages, old age homes, hospitals, anywhere someone needed a moment of peace. Music was how we gave it*." He paused, eyes distant. "*But during the pandemic… he caught COVID. It wasn't violent or dramatic. It was quiet. He was older, weaker… and one day, he just didn't recover*."

Violet reached forward instinctively, her hand brushing against his. "*I couldn't handle it,*" he said. "*I shut myself off. Didn't go out. Didn't speak to anyone. Just stayed in his room… playing the recordings he left behind. For months*."

She listened without interruption. "*Eventually, the school he used to work at offered me his job. They said he'd requested it long before… just in case.*"

Violin smiled faintly. "*So I took it. Slowly, I started going back to those old places. The orphanage. The hospital. Playing music on Saturdays like we used to. At first, it hurt. But now… it heals.*"

Violet was quiet for a long moment. Then she whispered, "*He'd be proud of you. Still playing. Still giving.*"

Violin looked up at her with a quiet nod. "*And what about you?*"

She raised a brow. "*What about me?*"

"*Now that you've tasted your first piece of chicken,*" he said with a small smile, "*what are you going to do next?*"

She leaned back, looking at her nearly empty plate, then up at the sky. "*Live,*" she said. "*One moment at a time. One flavor at a time.*"

They smiled. And somewhere between the rooftop breeze and the fading lunch hour, something unspoken settled between them, something stronger than sympathy. Something like connection.

After the last bite, the plates sat empty, but their hearts felt full. They paid the bill, thanked the staff, and descended the rooftop stairs, stepping back into the slow warmth of the afternoon.

It was 5:05 PM. The streets still bustled gently, but the sun had softened a little, casting golden light through the trees as they walked side by side, heading toward the mall across the road. As they strolled quietly, Violet suddenly paused.

"*Wait…*" she said, turning to him with wide eyes. "*Your violin.*"

Violin blinked. "*What about it?*"

"*You've been carrying it all day. And not once have you played for me.*"

He rubbed the back of his neck, looking sheepish. "*Well, I didn't think this was the time or place…*"

She narrowed her eyes playfully. "*You made me eat chicken for the first time in public. You don't get to be shy now.*"

He laughed nervously. "*That's different.*"

"*Music is your soul. I want to hear it. Not just remember it from this morning.*"

Before he could respond, a sudden burst of sound drifted toward them, upbeat,

cinematic, alive. Inside the mall, just past the entrance, a mini band group had gathered near the central atrium. A small crowd circled around them as the musicians launched into a lively movie background score. Violin turned toward the sound, smiling softly.

"*They're good,*" he murmured.

Violet's face lit up with mischief. "*I have an idea.*"

"*Oh no.*"

She grabbed his hand. "*Come on.*"

"*Violet..!*"

But she was already pulling him through the glass doors and into the music-filled space. The band played with raw energy, keys, guitar, and flute. The crowd clapped in rhythm, phones held high, cheers rising with every transition.

Violet clapped along, swaying to the sound. Then she stepped forward, just as the song ended. The band members looked at her curiously as she leaned in and whispered to the lead guitarist. She pointed toward Violin.

The guitarist grinned. Then nodded. "*Why not?*"

Violet turned back and marched toward him, face glowing with delight. "*They said yes.*"

Violin froze. "*Said yes to what?*"

"*To you joining them. Just one song. That's all I asked.*"

"*What?! Violet…no, I…*"

But the crowd had already turned. The band members waved him over, gesturing to his case. Someone from the audience even started clapping, thinking

it was part of the show. She leaned in, smiling warmly. "*You said your music was for the world. Well… here's the world.*"

The crowd parted slightly as she pulled him toward the circle. Violin looked around, caught between shock and amusement, and then, he took a deep breath.

Slowly, he slung the violin case off his shoulder. He opened it gently, as if unlocking something sacred. Then lifted the polished wood into his hands and placed it under his chin. The mall quieted slightly. Even the band stilled, waiting. Violin closed his eyes.

The moment his bow touched the strings, the air shifted. The first notes of *"Calum Scott's You Are the Reason"* whispered into the mall's atrium soft,

delicate, like a secret being shared. A hush settled over the crowd. The band behind him listened carefully, picking up the tempo, layering their sounds gently beneath the melody.

And then, something unexpected happened. Violet stepped forward. One of the band members offered her the mic without hesitation, sensing the moment. She didn't ask. She didn't second-guess.

She just sang. Her voice slipped in between his violin notes like silk threading through wind. Gentle, steady, and filled with emotion. The lyrics floated above the melody, carried by her warmth and pain, her hope and wonder.

The band caught on instantly, rising with them. A slow drumbeat. A hint of piano. A faint bass line thumping softly

like a heartbeat. The atrium filled. Not just with sound, but with magic.

Shoppers stopped in their tracks. Children tugged their parents closer. Phones were raised, but no one looked away from the performance. Something about it wasn't just music. It was a story unfolding in front of them, and they could feel it.

Violin, once shy, once unsure, now played with his eyes closed, every movement of the bow an extension of his soul. And when he opened his eyes, Violet was watching him, singing *just for him*.

As the final note faded into silence, he held the bow in place for a heartbeat longer, then let it go. The moment broke open like sunlight after rain.

The crowd erupted. Applause, cheers, whistles, claps that echoed across the polished floors of the mall. Violin stood still, overwhelmed. And in that wave of sound, his father's voice echoed in his heart.

"*My dear… wherever life takes you, whatever you choose to do. If you give it your heart, the world will give back something more beautiful than you ever imagined.*"

His eyes brimmed with tears, *not from sadness*, but from something deeper. Fulfillment.

Violet ran toward him and wrapped her arms around him tightly. He didn't resist. He let her hold him. He let himself be seen.

The band clapped and cheered, patting his back, raising their hands in victory.

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## Goodnight Without Goodbye

Several girls from the crowd surrounded him, holding up phones, begging for selfies. "*Can I take a picture with you?*" "*Your music was amazing!*" "*You're like… a violin god!*"

He blinked, completely caught off guard. Violet stepped back, watching the scene unfold, amusement dancing in her eyes.

When he finally escaped the small fan mob, breathless and red-faced, she grinned at him.

"*So…*" she said, crossing her arms. "*Celebrity status now?*"

He scratched his head, still blushing. "*Guess I just… got a few fans.*"

She laughed, bumping her shoulder gently into his. "*Finally. Girls fans. Took you long enough.*"

He gave her a look, then smiled. "*Thank you… for pulling me in.*"

She shrugged casually. "*What are friends for?*"

But her smile said more. He smiled back, softly. And just like that, the crowd faded behind them as they walked out of the mall. Two souls lighter than they'd been that morning, bound now by music, courage, and a melody they had made together.

As they stepped out of the mall, the sun was beginning to dip, casting golden hues across the sky. Violet looked up, breathing in the moment.

"*What's next on the list?*" he asked, his voice calm but eager.

She paused for a second, eyes scanning the horizon like a curious child.
"*I want to do something I've never done before.*"

"*Like what?*"

She grinned playfully. "*Let's crash a wedding*."

He blinked. "*A wedding?*"

"*Yes! Walk in like we belong, eat sweets, dance to random songs, pretend we're someone's cousins or something*."

He laughed aloud. "*You're mad.*"

She winked. "*A beautiful kind of mad.*"

"*Where do we even find a wedding?*"

She pointed down the road. "*See those lights near the hall? There. Trust me, I have sixth sense for celebration.*"

He shook his head in disbelief, still smiling. "*Fine. But if we get caught…*"

"*We won't. Just follow my lead.*"

And with that, she grabbed his hand and ran down the street like a storm of joy, dragging her violin man into someone else's love story. Before entering the wedding party, she came to a sudden halt in front of a clothing boutique that shimmered under fairy lights.

"*If we're going to crash a wedding, we better look the part,*" she declared, tugging at his arm.

"*I don't need anything fancy. Let's just go,*" he mumbled, uncomfortable with the idea.

She turned to him with her classic half-smile. "*Mr. Violin, we're not walking into a wedding looking like wanderers. Trust me.*"

He sighed in surrender as she dragged him inside. Within minutes, she was holding up suits in front of him, critically examining each one.

"*Nope… too shiny. This? Too uncle-ish. Ah—this one!*" She held up a sleek black suit with a violet shirt underneath. "*This is you.*"

"*I don't know… it looks expensive,*" he said, hesitating.

She didn't bother listening and spun around toward the women's section. Moments later, she reappeared with a soft violet gown, flowing and elegant, like a midnight flower in bloom.

They changed in the trial rooms. When they stepped out, both stood still, unknowingly admiring each other.

"*You look like… a dream,*" he said, caught off guard.

She twirled lightly and teased, "*And you look like someone who finally owns a comb*."

But just as he smiled, reality hit him. "*I… I don't have money for all this,*" he admitted, voice low.

She gently placed her hand on his chest. "*Don't worry*."

Before he could protest, she walked confidently toward the shop manager and started speaking. He stood at a distance, watching curious and nervous.

He noticed the manager's face change mid-conversation from neutral to

surprised to overly respectful. And just like that, the manager was smiling, nodding, and walking them to the door like VIPs.

Outside, he stared at her in disbelief. "*What did you tell him?*"

She looked ahead and replied nonchalantly, "*Used my father's name.*"

He froze. Something in her voice sounded different. Deep. Heavy. But he didn't push further. Just as she began to walk, she suddenly winced and held her leg.

"*What happened?*" he asked, concerned.

"*Nothing… Just walked too much today.*"

He looked around quickly and spotted an old cycle parked under a streetlamp, unlocked. Without a word, he walked

toward it, checked it once, then rolled it forward.

She smiled, already knowing what he was thinking. Before he could say anything, she sat sideways on the bar and wrapped her hands around his.

"*Go, go! Before someone sees us!*" she giggled. And they rode off into the night. One cycling, one smiling, both dressed like dreamers, stealing a moment from life that wasn't theirs.

The night had bloomed with fairy lights and loud music.

He quietly parked the cycle behind a thick bush, tucking his violin case safely beside it. "*Hope no one steals my soul,*" he muttered, patting the case.

Dressed like starlit dreams, the two walked toward the wedding hall.

"*Act normal. Like we belong here,*" she whispered.

"*Normal? We're dressed like celebrities,*" he mumbled.

She shot him a wink. "*Exactly*."

They entered with grace. Him stiff and nervous, her like a queen reborn. A uniformed guard near the entrance paused for a second, then gave them a respectful nod. "*Welcome, please come in,*" he said, escorting them through the crowd.

She thanked him gently, and they made their way to a corner table under the soft golden lights. He wiped the sweat off his palms on his pants. She noticed, pulled out her kerchief, and dabbed his forehead.

"*Are you always this nervous?*" she whispered, holding his hand under the table.

"*Only when I'm this close to jail,*" he murmured back, making her stifle a laugh. Just then, the hall lights dimmed. The newlywed couple entered amidst cheers and confetti. Champagne popped. Music soared. The crowd clapped and hollered. People began flooding the dance floor, swaying to the DJ's beats. But she didn't step into the crowd. Loud music wasn't her thing. Yet, her eyes sparkled with mischief.

"*I have an idea,*" she whispered, tugging at his sleeve.

"*Oh no… what now?*"

"*Trust me,*" she grinned, eyes devilish.

Slowly, like two undercover agents, they moved through the dancing crowd and reached near the couple, who were now laughing and feeding each other cake.

And then… SPLAT! SPLAT!

She smashed a chunk of cake into the bride's face while he, completely caught off guard, accidentally followed her lead into the groom's. The hall froze for a breath. She laughed and bolted. He stood frozen, horrified… until she ran back, grabbed his hand, and dragged him with her.

The crowd erupted. Wine flew. Cake landed on hair. Food rained from the buffet tables. Glasses clinked, screams turned to laughter. The wedding turned into a full-blown food fight. They ran between tables, ducked under chairs, giggling uncontrollably.

"*I can't believe you did that!*" he laughed, barely able to breathe.

"*You needed some excitement, Mr. Violin. You're welcome.*"

Covered in frosting and joy, they hid behind a curtain, breathless and bright. And for a moment, time forgot to move. Just two souls, laughing like life was never meant to be anything but this.

They stumbled out of the party hall, their clothes splattered with cake, wine, and joy. The night air hit their faces like freedom.

She laughed so hard, her knees buckled. "*Did you see that aunty throw a whole chicken leg at the DJ?*"

*"I think the groom threw champagne at the priest,"* he replied, panting, trying to

balance both his breath and the absurdity.

They darted into the street, still laughing, still glowing from the chaos. He rushed toward the bush, retrieved his violin box and their trusty stolen cycle. She quickly jumped onto the bar, clutching his shoulders.

"*Go! Go before they chase us!*" she screamed playfully.

"*Why do I feel like we're in a heist movie?"* he muttered, pedaling fast.

The cycle flew down the quiet Sunday streets. The wind tangled her hair, and she leaned her head back, eyes closed, face to the stars.

"*I wish this night never ends,*" she whispered.

He didn’t reply, but his silence was louder than any words. The cycle sped past sleeping shops, empty benches, and the flickering glow of sodium lights. Behind them, the sounds of the world faded.

Only laughter. And breath. And heartbeats. They didn’t know where they were going. And that was okay. They had each other. And this one wild, beautiful night.

The night felt heavy with unspoken words. They arrived at the quiet park, the same one where they started the day. He parked the cycle beneath the lamppost. The violin case rested on the stone bench. He stepped away and returned with a bottle of water. She was sitting still, staring at the ground, the

glow of streetlights reflecting in her eyes.

He gently poured water into his palms and wiped the cake stains off her violet gown. She didn't protest. Her eyes wandered to the clock tower nearby. 10:55 PM.

Two hours left. He noticed the change in her. Something had shifted. A silence had slipped into her spirit. To distract her, he pulled out a small, gift-wrapped box.

"*For you,*" he said, almost shyly.

She looked at him, confused. "*Now?*"

He nodded. She tore it open and inside were a collection of printed photos. All of her. All taken today. Smiling. Dancing. Laughing. Living.

And nestled between them: a delicate silver chain holding a tiny violin charm.

Her lips trembled. She looked at him and without a word, hugged him tightly, tears spilling from her eyes. He wrapped his arms around her slowly, one hand holding her head like she was glass.

"*Don't cry,*" he whispered. "*Please, not tonight*."

She gently pulled away, wiped her tears, and suddenly ran away.

"*Violet!*" he shouted, confused.

A minute later, she returned holding a bouquet of violet flowers, and a small note card tucked inside. She handed it to him.

"*There's something inside this,*" she said. "*But don't open it now. Promise me.*"

He nodded, heart pounding, and slipped it into his shirt pocket.

They sat down on the cold stone bench. The clock ticked. 11:30. Then 11:50. Then… Stillness.

They had talked so much since morning, but now, they said nothing. Then her phone rang. It was the doctor.

She didn't say a word. Just listened. Then hung up. Her admission things had arrived at the hospital. She didn't need reminding. The moment was close.

She stared at the grass. Then, softly, "*Will you play something for me?*"

He hesitated, shaking his head. "*Not now. Please…*"

She took his hands in hers. Her voice cracked. "*Please. Just once. Your*

*favorite note. Let it be the last thing I hear… before I go in.*"

He couldn't say no to that. With trembling hands, he took out his violin. Adjusted the bow. Closed his eyes. And he played. " *Yiruma's River Flows In You*"

Each note hung in the air like raindrops in slow motion. Her eyes shut. A tear rolled down her cheek. And another. The world fell silent. Just the music. Just them. The soft echo of the violin still lingered in the air, like a memory that refused to fade. And when he finally opened his eyes.

She was gone. She had walked away. Into the hospital. Into the life she couldn't run from anymore.

He sat there, violin in one hand, bouquet in the other, trying to breathe. She had slipped away, without a word. Without a goodbye. Just the music between them.

His fingers trembled as he took out the folded note she gave him earlier. It was creased now, slightly wet from his palm.

He opened it. And as he did, A bracelet slipped out and fell softly onto his lap. A delicate band, strung with violet beads, glistening under the streetlamp. It looked handmade. Personal. Like her.

He picked it up with care, holding it as though it might break. Then, he unfolded the note.

He closed his eyes. Took a breath that nearly cracked his chest, then began to read.

And with the very first line, his tears began to fall. One drop. Then another. Each one soaking the words she had written just for him. Words she couldn't say out loud. Words meant to stay.

*Mr. Violin,*

*Today… you gave me something I never had,*
*a day without fear,*
*a memory untouched by pain.*

*You didn't ask questions.*
*You just stayed.*

*I laughed like I wasn't dying.*
*I smiled like I had forever.*

*But the truth is… time's running out for me.*
*And before I go, I wanted you to know:*

*In just one day,*
*you became my favorite moment,*
*my safest silence,*
*my most beautiful song.*

*Don't search for me in a hospital.*
*Just close your eyes.*
*Play that violin.*
*And if you feel something warm in your chest,*
*that's me.*

*This bracelet? It's not a goodbye.*
*It's a promise that somewhere,*
*somehow,*
*your music will always find me.*

*Thank you… for making me feel alive.*

*With the echo of our one-day forever,*

*Ms. Violet*

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## Author's Note

*Some stories are not meant to last forever. But sometimes, even a single day can feel like a lifetime.*

*This story is about that day.*
*A day where love didn't ask for names,*
*or promises, or forever,*
*just presence. Just feeling. Just music.*

*To everyone who've walked away when it hurt the most, and to hearts that still carry music in silence,*
*this story is yours.*

*And if you ever feel alone,*
*just close your eyes,*
*you might hear a violin playing*
*somewhere under the violet sky.*

*With all my heart,*
*Yaazh Mozhi*